The Negative Effects of Technology on Children

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Introduction: Technology has become a huge part of our daily lives, but mostly in the daily lives of children. With school now being virtual due to the coronavirus pandemic, children are constantly using technology every day. The negative effects of this are always overlooked because children and parents allow the convenience of it all to overtake the long-term impact it can have on young people. Technology negatively affects children under different socioeconomic statuses, psychologically, physically, and has made education rely more on computers than ever before due to technological advancement and the coronavirus pandemic.

General Early Exposure to Technology

- Technology can affect children's personal lives, relationships, and overall physical health.
- In "Negative Effects of Technology on Children of Today" by Yasser Alghamdi, he touches upon a topic known as "computer vision syndrome". Being on a computer for too long causes so much strain on the eyes. This condition is due to close focus on computers which strains and tires the eyes causing dryness, headaches, and possible nearsightedness (Alghamdi, 2016).
- While children watch more television at such a young age, this impacts their physical activity and adds to their screen time which could affect their eyes. Alghamdi's article states that kids that are glued to their screens are overweight with significantly higher BMI (body mass index).

Psychological Well-being

- A 40,337 sample of 2 to 17-year-old children in the United States participated in a study to analyze the connection between screen time and psychological well-being amongst children (Campbell, Twenge, 2018).
- More than one hour a day on screens resulted in the lower psychological well-being (Campbell, Twenge, 2018).
- Anxiety and depression were linked with high users of screens. The 14 to 17-year-olds spending more than 7 hours a day with screens were more than twice as likely to ever have been diagnosed with depression or anxiety (Campbell, Twenge, 2018).
- Teenagers stay up late on their phones communicating with friends or scrolling through social media which takes away sleep and stimulates the brain so much at night making it harder to fall asleep (Campbell, Twenge, 2018).
- High and moderate users of technology had way less self-control including sitting still, completing simple tasks, not getting distracted and perseverance (Campbell, Twenge, 2018).

Digital Divide/Educational Gap

- Technology has created a digital divide amongst higher- and lower-class families/children. As children are benefiting from technology on the higher-class side, the children on the lower-class side are falling more and more behind in education because they don't have the same access.
- Amongst lower class families that do have access to computers, it was found that they do not have access to internet connection which is another expense.
- Brown wrote, "Students' access to computers is characterized by relative standings of 'more affluent,' 'well-to-do,' 'poorer,' and 'disadvantaged' communities."
- Brown's article, "Access, Instruction, and Barriers," focuses on the disconnection of some students of color and those at risk for failure due to the lack of access to technology.

Social Media

- Another interesting topic I came across is something known as "Facebook Depression". Researchers describe this as depression that develops when preteens and teens spend a great deal of time on social media sites, such as Facebook, and then begin to develop common symptoms of depression (Clarke-Pearson, O'Keeffe, 2011).
- Social media has this capability to mess with a child's psychological state by showing unrealistic body images and lives that children may always believe is real when it could be edited and fake. When adolescents struggle with these types of feelings, they are more inclined to turn to risky Internet sites and blogs for help that may promote substance abuse or aggressive/self-destructive behaviors (Clarke-Pearson, O'Keeffe, 2011).

COVID-19's Impact

- Not only has COVID-19 made a huge change by going virtual for education, but it has also caused even more addiction to social media and the internet for children.
- In "How Parents and Their Children Used Social Media and Technology at the Beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Associations with Anxiety", it is found that, "On average, parents reported that both they and their children (especially teenagers ages 13-18) had increased technology and social media use since the beginning of social distancing.

Virtual Learning

- Virtual learning is not beneficial for every child.
- With education now being virtual, every child must have some type of device to log on to Zoom meetings or any type of virtual class in order to keep up with learning and progressing through school.
- Virtual learning does not provide face to face interaction and allows for children to get distracted easily.